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OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE
OF THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS
APPOINTED
TO ENQUIRE INTO THE STATE
OF THE
BRITISH FISHERY.

BY
ROBERT FALL, ESQ.

L O N D O N.

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M,DCC,LXXXVI.



TO THE HONOURABLE
THE COMMITTEE
OF THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS
APPOINTED
TO ENQUIRE INTO THE STATE
OF THE
BRITISH FISHERIES,
THE FOLLOWING
OBSERVATIONS
ON THEIR
REPORT,

ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

BY THEIR MOST OBEDIENT

HUMBLE SERVANT,

ROBERT FALL.

DUNDEE,
Jan. 30, 1786.



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OBSERVATIONS, &c.

BY the desire of a very respectable member of Parliament, to whom his country is much indebted for many patriotic exertions in its service, I have read over and considered the Report of the Committee of the House of Commons on the very important subject of the British Fisheries: it contains the evidence of so many people examined *viva voce*, and of so many more with whom the Committee have carried on a correspondence, that I cannot within the limits of these few pages do justice to the information brought forward in it; I can only (as far as my judgement goes) point out those things which strike me most forcibly as tending

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to

to the improvement of this most valuable branch of commerce*.

BUSS FISHING IN THE NORTH S E A.

Report, p-
262, 263.

In a letter I had the honour of writing to the gentleman above alluded to, for his private information, and which is printed in the Appendix to the Report, I recommended very strongly the encouragement of busses fishing in the north sea: the herrings are caught at such a distance from the shore in the early part of the season, that it is impossible to fish for them with boats; it must be done with decked vessels, fitted out at a very great expence, and never will be done without the assistance of Government.

When this trade was attempted in the

* In the margin, references are made to the pages of the printed Report, in support of whatever is advanced relating to the different branches of the fishery, and which in the course of the following observations I have arranged under different heads.

year

year 1749, very liberal encouragement was given to the Society for the British Fishery; but in the hands of so large a Company it could not prosper, and was given up with the loss of a great part of the sum subscribed.

In all fisheries, the interest of the actual fisherman ought to be connected with that of the adventurer; a circumstance which has not been sufficiently attended to either by those engaged in the west-country buss fishery or by the public in the distribution of the bounties. A sailor or fisherman being made certain of his wages, whether he is successful or not, becomes a very inactive person, and particularly so, in a part of the country where the natives have a propensity to idleness.

I advised in the letter already alluded to, that the bounty of 2l. 10s. per ton should be renewed for the encouragement of this fishery: I would, however, now suggest, that part of it be given to the captain and crew: 40s. per ton to the adventurer, and a proportion equal to 10s.

per ton to be divided among the captain and crew according to their different stations and according to the quantity of herrings caught.

I am not able to form any scheme for the proper distribution of this bounty in so far as relates to the fishery in the North Sea; because, I do not consider any attempts that have been made to prosecute it as at all conclusive, or as affording sufficient data with respect to the probable quantity of herrings that may be caught.

However, the following one, which is formed on the success of the west-country buss fishery, where on an average, the busses do not complete above half their cargoes will sufficiently illustrate the idea. A vessel of 80 tons measurement, fitted out for the bounty, carries about 500 barrels or 40 lasts. If she is not unlucky, she returns with half her cargo or 20 lasts of herrings. Ten shillings per ton therefore, would be equal to 40s. per last of herrings, or 40l. on the cargo, which sum might be divided between the master and crew in the following proportions:

Captain's

	Shares				l.	s.	d.
Captain's	$2\frac{1}{2}$	-	-	-	6	13	4
Mate	$1\frac{1}{2}$	-	-	-	4	0	0
Cooper	$1\frac{1}{2}$	-	-	-	4	0	0
Eight men	8	-	-	2l. 13s. 4d.	21	6	8
Three apprentices at $\frac{1}{2}$ each	$1\frac{1}{2}$	-	-	1l. 6s. 8d.	4	0	0
	15 Shares				40	0	0

These premiums ought to be paid by the collector of the port where the vessels unload, and an affidavit ought to be made by the persons receiving them, that they are received on their own account and on no other. If there should be no money in the custom house, the bus owner ought to find it, and receive a draft at sight on the Receiver General for his reimbursement.

I do not look upon the application of this 10s. per ton to the captain and crew as a diminution of the bounty of 50s. per ton to the adventurer, as he will be enabled by the premium to man his vessel on better terms, and it will have the happy effect of connecting the interest of the actual fisherman with that of the adventurer, and be a strong motive to bring into exertion the industry and care of the captain and crew.

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It may be said, that all this distribution ought to be left to the adventurers themselves, but when I find it has been hitherto so much neglected, I think the public are well entitled to apply such a part of the bounty as will compel them to follow a system, which is ultimately for their own benefit.

The busses ought to be expressly confined to fish floating with their nets, and debarred the use of boats, (which are a temptation to fish on the coast in preference to deep water, where the best herrings are always to be found.) The regulations as to the place of fishing, the equipage for fishing, and the curing of the herrings should be such as to induce the British fishermen to follow the example of the Dutch. It must be a considerable time before we can acquire such a degree of skill either in the mode of fishing, or in the cure of our fish as will enable us to rival them, and it will be still longer before we can come near them in their frugality and good management; by the bounty, therefore, these disadvantages must
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be for some time made up to the adventurers. Towards the end of the fishing season, the herrings come nearer to the coast for the purpose of spawning; here the British fisherman has a decided advantage over the Dutch, as he has an opportunity, if he has not completed his cargo before, to do it by fishing in the firths and bays, to which the herrings resort at this season, and boats may be used with great advantage, when the busk has not a sufficient range of sea to float with her nets: I would, therefore, recommend that, after the 10th day of August, the restriction as to the use of boats be taken off, and leave it in the fishermen's option to use either the busk or boats to float their nets.

Refined salt ought to be used in this fishery: the Dutch are particularly attentive to this point as a very material article for the preservation of the herrings; and when the Legislature grants a bounty, care ought to be taken that no other kind of salt be used.

Vessels for this fishery require to be of a particular build, calculated to lie easy on the water when floating with their nets, and as
it

it is very expensive to build them in Britain, I would recommend, that leave be given to the British fisherman to buy vessels adapted for the trade either from the Dutch or elsewhere; that such vessels be declared free bottoms for the year they fish, with certificate from the custom house from whence they fit out, and to which they return, in order to enable the owner, when the fishing season is over, to employ the vessel for the remainder of the year in the coasting or foreign trade; and for farther encouragement, the vessel ought to be declared a free bottom for all time coming, after having been employed five years in the fishery.

Report, p.
5 and 14.

This branch of trade will fall very much into the hands of those who follow the Yarmouth fishery; the vessels they use at present are calculated for it, and their present method of fishing on the banks is very similar to that of the Dutch. They are better acquainted with the manner of floating and managing their vessels than any set of people in this island; and have wages and provisions adapted for this kind of fishery; the only additional equip-

equipment they require will be deeper nets and of a larger mesh.

I have often been surprized that the adventurers from that quarter, who are very enterprizing and industrious, have not followed this mode of fishing, as they are so well prepared for it, and as the season for it suits them so well: the season for their own fishery beginning nearly about the time when the season for this is at an end.

Herrings caught early in the season and in deep water are of a very superior quality, and sell at a corresponding price. When the herrings in Sweden are sold so low as 8s. per barrel, the Dutch herrings find sale at a high price in the different markets in Europe. The quantity now exported by us is not great; at an average of some years, not exceeding 37,000 barrels per annum. If it is increased by the exertions of the nation, it will be of importance to have qualities adapted to all markets, otherwise, in time we might come to be in the situation of the people in Sweden, who are obliged to convert their herrings into oil instead of food, were it not that in this

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country,

country, the expence of the fishery is so great, that it must be totally given up whenever we cannot get such a price as will enable us to bring the fish to market at a reasonable profit.

I find from the Report, that the number of busses fitted out by the Dutch and other nations in the year 1784, was 270, and employed 3669 seamen*. If encouragement is given to prosecute this fishery, I should recommend to the Legislature, not to oblige the fishermen to carry a superfluous number of men or of nets. The Dutch fishery at a distance from their coast must be better provided than those require to be who fish nearer home. I will not take upon me to say decidedly what the number of men and quantity of nets should be; the latter ought to be moderate, as the nets are a very expensive part of the outfit, and liable to great decay from various circumstances, which every person conversant in the herring fishery is well acquainted with, and by which many have suffered very deeply.

* By a mistake in the printing of the Report, the number is only stated to be 2669.

A buss of 80 or 90 tons, fitted out from Holland, carries from 32 to 36 nets as her complement for the fishery, and 10 or 12 spare ones, each net is 50 yards long, and 10 yards deep, which is nearly one net to every two tons of the ship's measurement.

The law, as it now stands, requires 18 men to a buss of 80 tons; whereas the Dutch busses of that size only carry 12 or 14. There is no reason to oblige the British fisherman to be at this additional expence of 40 per cent. in provisions and wages: it is contrary to the spirit of the fishery, which requires to be carried on with the greatest frugality.

BUSS FISHING ON THE WEST COAST.

THE adventurers in this fishery live mostly on the west coast. I do not think they can, from the structure of their vessels, ever follow the fishery in the north sea, nor are their nets adapted to it. In their own seas, for good reasons given by Mr. Maxwell, they cannot fish by floating their

244, 245

nets from the vessel. This fishery, therefore, must be carried on as at present; the vessels are floating magazines for casks and salt, and the boats they carry enable the crew to fish in the lochs. The herrings caught by these bufs cost Government
 p. 106, 174. from 12s. to 14s. per barrel; and at the same time the proprietors have not been gainers; at least they are not so at the present bounty of 30s. per ton. Mr. Maxwell,
 p. 240, 241. in his evidence, states a calculation, by which it appears that, on an average, a buf of 47 tons, carrying 240 barrels, between the year 1778 and the year 1784, caught only 110 barrels of herrings in a season; and after receiving the bounty of 30s. per barrel, the owners lost on the voyage 60l. 4s. 10d. If this buf had returned with a full cargo, it does not appear to me that they would have been considerable gainers. Let us make the calculation on the same principles that Mr. Maxwell has done. The vessel carried out 240 barrels, and returned with 110 barrels of herrings: had she returned with a full cargo, she would have returned with 130
 barrels

barrels more, which, at the price in the calculation at 20s. - £. 130 0 0

Add the debenture at 2s. 8d. per barrel, - - 17 6 8

Add also what the account of the 110 barrels is charged for waste in salt and barrels returned into store, - 3 18 0

For re-packing and cellar rent, 2 3 4

153 8 0

The other side of the account will stand thus:

Empty barrels	-	-	£. 27	1	8
Salt	-	-	11	18	4
Freight to Ireland	-	-	16	5	0
Duty at do.	-	-	6	10	0
Commission	-	-	3	4	0
Charges	=	=	3	5	0

68 4 0

£. 85 4 0

If from this is deducted 60l. 4s. 10d. loss on the 110 barrels, it will appear that an adventurer would only be a gainer in the very small sum of 24l. 19s. 2d.

In aid of the buss fishery on the west coast, it was recommended to Government to allow the adventurer to buy herrings from

from the boats, which has been wisely done by an act passed last session of Parliament; from it great advantages will follow both to the busses and the boat fishermen. On the one hand, the busses will be certain of completing their cargoes, though at some additional expence for the purchase of fresh herrings; and on the other, the boat fishermen will be greatly benefited, as the busses will afford them a ready market for the herrings they catch. These vessels, which I have said are moving magazines, will require to purchase a quantity sufficient to fill one half of all the casks they carry, which, if we suppose 150 busses fitted out, each carrying 300 barrels, will amount to 22,500 barrels.

p. 226, 351. This traffic will have the happy effect of producing good agreement between the busses and the boat fishermen, who, having separate interests, have hitherto been hostile to each other. Being united, they will mutually assist one another, not only in the regular conducting of the fishery, but in giving early intelligence to each other when the herrings set in.

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The connection betwixt bufs and boat fishers affords to my mind a strong additional reason for the bounty to the west-country bufses, which will be stated more at large under the article of boat fishing. Although it appears to the face of the account that the bounty on the west-country bufs fishery amounts to a very large sum in proportion to the quantity of herrings caught, yet there are great advantages to the State from it, which are ably pointed out by Mr. Maxwell in his letter, part of which I have inserted in the Appendix. p. 242.

BOAT FISHING ON THE WEST COAST.

In the letter I had the honour of writing on this subject, I strongly recommended the encouragement of this fishery, which hitherto has not received the smallest assistance from Government. I will not repeat the arguments made use of; but will beg leave to refer the reader to the letter itself in the Appendix.

In

In the Report, the poverty of the fishermen on the west coast, and the want of boats and nets to carry on the fishery, are strongly insisted on; from the want of the first, they have it not in their power to transport themselves from place to place; and from want of the latter, they have not the means of catching the fish where they are to be found; of
 p. 110. this the Committee are fully sensible: and I cannot put it in a more forcible point of view than in the words of Mr. Maxwell:

p. 234. —“ The natives upon the fishing coast of
 “ Scotland are in general in a state of abject
 “ poverty; they are unable to purchase
 “ fishing boats, salt, barrels, or almost any
 “ fishing materials whatever, so as to avail
 “ themselves of the advantages which a
 “ body of herrings present: when they
 “ happen to appear in the neighbourhood,
 “ the utmost that a number of them are able
 “ to affect, by joining their whole stock to-
 “ gether, is to fit up an old net, and pur-
 “ chase a crazy boat, wherewith they take
 “ as many herrings as they can; some of
 “ which they use themselves, and boil up
 “ the rest for the sake of the oil they
 “ afford.”

I am

I am not well acquainted with the western coast of Scotland; but having full confidence in the candour and knowledge of the gentleman who states these facts, and which, if they required support, are proved p. 350, 351. by many witnesses examined by the Committee, I must consider it as a just and faithful picture of the distressed fishermen; at the same time we must observe that they are anxious to prosecute the fishery whenever an opportunity offers, and join together their very miserable apparatus for that purpose.

The humanity of the country is called upon to assist their fellow subjects in so abject a state of poverty, to bring their powers into action, and to forward the improvement of the British fisheries. In the letter I wrote on this subject, I recommended giving bounties to the boat fishery similar to that given to the buffes, which would employ the same number of hands, and not cost Government one third of the expence. But on considering the matter farther, I am of opinion that it would be in vain to offer bounties to fishermen who cannot buy boats or nets; from their depreſt situa-

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tion ; it would be almost impossible to bring them to rendezvous ; it would be equally so to form any proper check upon them, so as to satisfy Government that they had done what was necessary on their part, and the bounties would be a very heavy expence annually to the public.

To adapt, therefore, the benevolence of the public to the state of the country and of the fishermen, the means of fishing ought to be given by Government to these poor people. Much is said in the Report of the advantages that would arise to them, if they were in possession of small lots of land, but it would be more conducive to their emerging from their present state of poverty, to give them property in boats, nets, and lines, without which they can do nothing as fishermen. Bounties of this sort are recommended by Dr. Anderson, Mr. Maxwell, and others ; they will be the most effectual means of forwarding the improvement of the fishery on this coast, with a moderate expence to Government.

Suppose a boat with nets and lines for this fishery costs 30l. and that this benevolence was extended as far as 500 boats, the expence

pence to Government would be 15,000*l*. which would be the means of employing 3000 fishermen, and of rescuing from poverty 15,000 people, reckoning five to a family. It has cost Government in bounties to buffes, from the year 1751 to the year 1782, a period of 32 years, 316,365*l*. All that is now required is 15,000*l*. which alone would bring forward as many boats as can be employed by 250 buffes, nearly the greatest number that ever rendezvoused. If a plan of this kind is adopted, great care ought to be taken to fix proper situations, having in view both the herring and white fishery, so that the fishermen may be employed as near the fishing ground as possible; it would therefore be necessary to employ a person conversant both in sea affairs and in the business of the fishery, who should repair to the west coast, and fix on the different fishing stations where the bounties of boats, &c. are to be given. He ought to examine and consider carefully where the fishery can be carried on to advantage, having in view the number of fishermen inhabiting each district; and on his report, such a plan for the distribution of

boats might be formed, as would best answer the views of the public, and the service of the poor inhabitants. Boats might be given to such as need them most, and would probably make the best use of them; at the same time, I confess, it is difficult to find such a person as I describe, in whose capacity and integrity perfect reliance may be placed. One gentleman was examined before the Committee, whom I consider as in every shape qualified for this undertaking; if he were to take it upon him, I am satisfied that it would be done to the purpose. The obligations to be required from the fishermen may be the subject of discussion and arrangement after the report is made. For the present, by way of example, let us suppose that an application is made for a boat to be delivered next season; in the month of June preceding, the fishermen ought to receive 200lb. of dressed hemp, which they should be obliged to work into ten nets, adapted to the west-country fishery, before the time appointed for the delivery of the boat.

The person employed, after weighing the nets and finding them right, should deliver

liver to the fishermen the boat, with net ropes, other ropes, two anchors, fishing lines, and hooks; first receiving security from them, and the proprietor of the land on which they live, (or other responsible person) that they will make use of the boat and nets for the purpose of the fishery only. The fishermen ought to make oath, that they will follow the herring fishery for the full space of three months in the season, and the white fishery for three months more, at any time during the year when it will best answer. There ought to be delivered with the boat 15lb. of hemp, to repair and supply nets lost; and for the two following years the boat and nets ought to be produced to the officers of Government, in good order, in the months of May or June, and the same oath as before be renewed for the ensuing season;—after three years, the boat and nets should belong to the fishermen; and if any die or absent themselves, their places might be filled up by the rest of the crew, with the approbation of the bondsman. This property should not to be liable to be seized or attached either by the proprietor or by any other person; it is the gift of Government
for

for the encouragement of the fishery, and ought to be unalienably the property of the fishermen and their children. As some fishing stations require stouter boats than others, to enable the fishermen to pass from one place to another in quest of the shoals of herrings, and to follow the cod and ling, according to the distances of the fishing ground from their respective habitations, the size of the boats may vary from that of the herring boats used on the coast of Fife, to that of those made use of on the coast of John's Haven. Such boats are very fit

P. 50, 51,
174. to go from one place to another, and follow the shoals of herrings without risque to the people. Thus by supplying the people with the means of fishing both herrings and cod, they may, in time, find employment as fishermen during a great part of the year; and by living in different stations, they will have the best opportunities of discovering both the shoals of herrings, and the fishing banks for cod and ling.

On considering the state of the country, I cannot see the propriety of separating the interest of the fisherman from that of the proprietors of land; they are naturally connected

ned with each other. In such an uncultivated country, the former must look up to the latter for his assistance in distress, and it is the interest of the latter to support the fisherman, as his emigration must be hurtful to his property. On those principles I wish the proprietor of the land to be the bondsman.

The inspector of stations ought to take care to fix them, and to give boats and nets to the inhabitants only on those estates where the proprietors shall satisfy him of their good intentions towards the fishermen by giving them proper encouragement.— Open boats of the size described may carry a few casks and some salt, perhaps 20; but on this I reckon very little, as I do not think the fisher ought to be the curer. That business will belong, as it has always done, to another set of men, whose characters are at stake for the cure and full packing of the herrings.

The sale of the fresh herrings from the boats must be to the buffes and vessels fitted out for the purchase. Formerly, it was the practice to fit out such vessels from different places with salt and casks; but this
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has been in a great measure discontinued for some years, it will, however, revive again as soon as the adventurer can form a reasonable expectation of success, from a number of boats, well appointed for fishing, being on the coast.

Merchants will provide stores for casks and salt in the vicinity of the fishing lochs, which will serve to supply the vessels following the purchase trade; the coming of the herrings into one loch or another is so uncertain, that it is impossible for the public, or for private persons, to form such magazines as will be exactly upon the spot; all that can be done is to leave it to the adventurers in the fishery to fix them in the most probable places for the supply of vessels in the manner I have mentioned. I cannot take upon me to say, that the plan I propose for the encouragement of the boat fishery in the West Highlands, is the best that can be devised — I chiefly have in view, to call the attention of the public to the most likely method of relieving these poor people, and of calling forth their exertions in the service of the fisheries. The more simple that all regulations respecting the fisheries are made they

they will answer the better. When the fisherman fishes for himself he will be more industrious than when he does it for another, he will take better care of his boat and nets, and will be more frugal in his provisions than when he is maintained at another person's expence.

BOAT FISHERY ON THE EAST COAST.

The only herring fisheries on the east coast of Scotland, are on the coast of Caithness, and in the Firth of Forth.

The first has for some years been successful, and is carried on by boats from the Firth of Cromarty, and the coast of Caithness, which begin floating their nets about the beginning of July, and continue till the end of August. The herrings here are caught near the shore and of a very good quality, but the number of boats is small, owing to the uncertainty and the expence of this fishery.

The fishermen on the coast of Caithness were for many years in a very inactive state, contracts have lately been made for their cod-

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and ling, and they are now become active and industrious. The boats they make use of are smaller than they ought to be for the herring fishery, but they are not able to purchase larger ones, and still less able to purchase nets. I should recommend, that a sum of money be given by the public, for the encouragement of the fishery on this coast. What that should be I cannot do better than leave to that very public-spirited gentleman who has so much property in the country, and who has delivered his sentiments on the fisheries to the Committee,

* Mr. Sinclair.

page 274. * In justice to his public spirit, and humanity to the fishermen, I must observe, that he has set an example of a most liberal kind — His family formerly got a considerable share of the fishermen's profit, which he has relinquished, and has farther given up to the those at Thurso the tythes of their fish.

BOAT FISHERY IN THE FIRTH OF FORTH.

THIS was formerly the greatest fishery round the island: it had been for many years so regular, that it was the period of paying the

the debts contracted on the coast by the fishermen. The language was, "You shall be paid when the herring fishery is over." Early in this century it began to fail, and for many years few or no herrings were caught: the number of boats towards the end of the last century, are said to have been near 800, collected from along the coast, from Beadnel in Northumberland, to John's Haven in ———shire, which by the failure of the fishery, dwindled down to less than one hundred. In the year 1750, it became again considerable; since which it has been carried on with various success, in some years great quantities of herrings have been caught, and in others very few: for two years past it has been remarkably successful, and there is reason to believe that the fishery may again be regular.

The old method of fishing was by setting the nets betwixt two anchors at night and drawing them in the morning, at the season when the herrings came to spawn, and the fishery seldom lasted above a week. The fish never come to the spawning ground until they are ready to

spawn and quit it immediately after, nor are they at this time of so excellent a quality as at any other, being in a sickly state. The period is generally about the 1st, 2d, or 3d week in September.

Of late years the fishermen have begun earlier (about the middle of July) to look for herrings in deeper water, and to fish for them by floating with their nets in the same manner as the Dutch buffes or Yarmouth vessels do. This new method has been very successful, the herrings caught are of a superior quality, and as they never hang long in the nets, but are brought alive into the boats, they are much fitter for curing. A boat goes out about ten at night, returns by daylight, and delivers the herrings in as good a state as the Dutch do to their buffes. This fishery lasts for about two months, and ends with the old method about the spawning time.

It is carried on however at a very great expence of nets; a boat properly equipt ought to have two sets adapted to different fisheries; one of very fine twine and twice the depth of the other, to entangle the herrings at the season of floating when the fish are active
and

and strong, and another for the spawning time, not so deep as the former, and of rounder and stronger twine. The herrings are then easily caught from their heavy state, but the quantity is at times so great, that if the twine is not of sufficient strength, the fisherman loses both herrings and nets.

The herrings caught in the year 1784, at Eymouth, Dunbar, and on the Fife coast, amounted to about 10,000 barrels. In the year 1785, the fishery would have been equally successful had it not been interrupted by stormy weather; the quantity caught was about 7000 barrels.

From this success I expected that the number of boats would have increased very rapidly, but they are not yet above 120; and I do not find that the fishermen are so enterprising as to go on with spirit, or to lay hold of the opportunity which is afforded by the return of the shoals of herrings, which may, after remaining a number of years on the coast, repair to some other. The long period of unsuccessful years, has made such an impression on them that they will not exert themselves with
spirit

spirit unless they have some encouragement.

I would therefore beg leave to suggest, that the public give for this fishery the sum of 2000*l.* to be bestowed in hemp to the fishermen, which will probably add to it at once above 100 boats.

A boat at the float fishery has nine nets each, 45 yards long and 10 yards deep, which require $4\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. of drest hemp, and cost	-	-	-	-	£. 15 0 0
Hemp required for other nets	-				5 0 0

£. 20 0 0

I mean, that the bounty should only be given to boats built after passing the act, and that the fishermen be obliged to muster their boats and nets in good order for three years at the commencement of the fishery, in the month of July, before the proper officers.

The shoals of herrings are so great, that the quantity caught will be in proportion to the number of boats fitted out; tradition says there has been 60,000 barrels caught in the Firth of Forth in one season, and I believe it from comparing the quantity caught

caught now with the number of boats formerly employed.

Though the fishermen should get the value in hemp of 20*l.* to every boat, the farther equipment will cost 50*l.* more, and it may be observed, that the premium required from Government to encourage this fishery is very small in comparison to that required for the west coast: but the country being in a more opulent situation, the business can be carried on with less assistance from Government — Calculating the probable success by the employment of 200 boats, it may soon become a great fishery, and a much greater one if the number increases to what it formerly was, but that will require many years of successful fishery.

As to what can be done for the encouragement of the herring fishery on the coast of Orkney and Zetland, I must leave it to the consideration of those better acquainted than I am with these coasts. There appears to be very little information on this subject in the Report of the Committee.

COD AND LING FISHERY,

Having considered the different herring fisheries round the coast of Scotland, as far as I am acquainted with them, I now proceed to that of Cod and Ling.

Rep. p. 38. I agree intirely in opinion with those who think that the fishery in the North Sea between the coasts of Holland and Scotland, cannot be considered as furnishing fish in sufficient quantity for foreign markets, or of presenting an object of sufficient magnitude to engage public attention.

The fishery on the coast of Caithness and Sutherland I have under contract with the fishermen, and employ above 100 boats. They fish in small boats, and have been of late years very successful. This fishery was carried on by my predecessors above seventy years ago, who continued it for many years, and at last gave it up. I suspect that so little money came into the fishermen's pockets, that they never exerted themselves; this being now remedied, they fish with spirit and success. I do not know that any public aid can be asked for the encouragement of this fishery. I have mentioned

tioned it principally with a view to satisfy the public of the great benefit that arises to the fishermen and the country from the support of the landed proprietors. To this the fishery is much indebted, as not only the gentleman I have already mentioned, but all the other land owners, in their different situations, have given it their utmost countenance and support.

COD FISHERY AT ZETLAND.

The quantity of fish caught at, and exported from, Zetland in a season, (which lasts from the middle of May till about the same time in August) is, annually, from 6 to 700 tons, and affords employment for about 600 boats, and from 3200 to 3300 fishermen. This certainly is a very considerable quantity for so great a number of boats and men, being only about one ton to a boat in the season, and reckoning the ton to consist, as stated, of 25 fish to the cwt., is, to each man in the year, no more than 100 fish, which, at 4d. for every fish, amounts only to 1l. 13s. 4d. This small pittance is earned at the expence of a very

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laborious

laborious life, added to the great danger to which the fisherman is exposed on account of the distance from the shore at which the
 p. 40. fishery ground lies. His earnings are so small, that he must find support for his family from the land he occupys, from fishing along the coast small fish for his family's use, and from what oil is extracted from the Pilloet and Selloch fish.

The fishery along this coast is entirely, except in one instance, in the hands of the land owners. The fish form part of their rental, and without them the land would be of but little value. Government cannot interfere without a proper indemnification for loss of property; and I find the Com-
 p. 46. mittee are satisfied that oppression, which has been so much the subject of conversation, does not exist.

It appears to be a kind of fishery which can be best carried on by the proprietors of land; nor do I see how the fishermen can do without their assistance, although they were declared free. The fishing season occupies the fishermen but for a few months; at other seasons, I believe, the weather is so uncertain, that they cannot, with any degree
 of

of safety, carry on the fishery at such a distance from the coast; if they could, the proprietors of land, for their own interest, would have prevailed on them to do it before now.

I was naturally led to expect that some application would have been made by the gentlemen inhabiting those islands, pointing out to Government wherein their fishery could be improved: they are certainly the best judges, as it is their principal occupation, and on it the value of their estates depend. I have not discovered any thing either from them or from the other witnesses examined by the Committee, so far as regards the boat fishery, farther than the idea of making the fishermen free, which I must consider as a speculative idea, and not adapted to the state of the country.

In a letter from a gentleman at Stornaway, he says, “ All the fish belong to the
 “ taxmen at a stipulated price. It may be
 “ thought that this is a species of oppression; be that as it may; I am morally
 “ certain if this plan, which has subsisted
 “ for ages, was not adhered to, there would
 F 2 “ hardly

“ hardly be a ling or cod exported from
“ the Lavis.”

I suspect this may apply to the fisheries in
Zetland, and that it would be hazardous
for Government to interfere between the
landlord and fisherman. There is a mu-
tual interest between them; and the defects
on either side will be done away as the spi-
rit of fishery and commerce increases amongst
them.

The only improvement pointed at for the
p. 33, 39. cod and ling fishery on this coast is by
wherries and other decked vessels. To con-
sider this point, I had recourse to the experi-
ment which was actually made; an account
p. 134. of it is to be found in a Report made in the
year 1766 to the Board of Customs in
Scotland: it states, that 8 wherries of 25
tons burden were fitted out, each with 8
men. The Report mentions the great num-
ber of lines they carried; that they prose-
cuted the fishery in a very dextrous man-
ner, and that they went farther out on the
banks with their wherries than the inhabi-
tants used to go, and began two months
sooner. They caught 1056 cwt. or nearly
53 tons

53 tons of fish, when dry, which, to each wherry, is about $6\frac{1}{2}$ tons of dry fish.

I will not state any opinion concerning the profit of the adventurers; but if Government had given these vessels a bounty of 50s. per ton, as proposed, each vessel ^{p. 35} would have cost the public 62l. 10s. for the season; so that the six tons and a half of fish would have cost the nation nearly 10l. per ton, which is more than their value before they are salted. I must consider a bounty so far beyond the value of the object for which it is given, as a waste of the public treasure. In justice, however, to the gentlemen in Zetland, I do not find any such request from them.

The great aid that appears useful to the Zetland gentlemen, is vessels for protection in the fishing ground, to which the fishermen can resort, and be in safety, for ^{p. 33, 39} the immediate prosecution of the fishery with more success; and by the assistance of which they may not be obliged to return to the shore until the end of the week, or may stay longer out if it be needful.

Mr. Toars proposes that vessels condemned for smuggling be given by Government

ment for the encouragement of the fishery. I think the idea is a good one; and they cannot, in the first place, be given in a better way than to the gentlemen on the Zetland coast, because the situation of their fishermen is the most hazardous. Thus a set of vessels would be delivered from the flames, and, without any expence to the public, be converted to the purpose of saving lives, and improving the fisheries, a business, indeed, very different from their original destination in trade. The vessels so given ought to be delivered to the landed proprietors, on their giving bond, and be employed during the fishing season only; when that is over, they ought to be brought to the harbour of Lerwick, and there to remain until the next fishing season. To prevent any improper use of the vessel, words ought to be painted upon her, signifying that she belongs to the Crown, and mentioning the part of the coast on which she is employed. As a farther security, a bond ought to be given, with proper penalties, that she shall never be employed in any trade, but be kept for the use of the fishery: and a check can now and then be
made

made by a King's cutter sailing unexpectedly round and seeing that the vessels, as registered in the Custom-house books at Lerwich, are all at their fishing stations, and not otherways employed.

WEST-COUNTRY COD AND LING FISHING.

It is said by many, that there are a number of fishing banks on the west and north-west coast, which they describe as inexhaustible.

The equipment of boats by Government, ^{p. 87. 196.} given to the inhabitants under the obligations ^{225. 379,} already proposed, will be the means of a full discovery of all of them, and will enable the fishermen to extend the fishery to the utmost limits of which it is capable.

It is the practice in Stornaway, ^{p. 380, 381.} for the fishermen to pay 2s. 7d. for the use of a boat and a servant to attend it, or 1s. 7d. for the boat alone. So far as the fishermen are there supplied, it will be a matter of consideration whether or not to give them boats.

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It will not be necessary in the view of supplying their present wants, and it would lay idle the boats of the proprietors; but a gift of nets might be to this class of fishermen useful for the prosecution of the herring fishery, the expence of the boats would be saved to Government. The benevolence of Government must be adapted to the different situations of the fishermen and fishing grounds, and will fall under the particular consideration of the inspector.

P. 384.

I observe that a short six-oared boat is said to cost only 5l. 5s.: this price is either very low, or the boat is not so large as the description conveys to the inhabitants on the coast on which I live; I suspect it is not of the size of our herring-fishing boat, which costs, with sails and oars, 15l. 10s., and is also manned with six men.

P. 384.

At Stornaway, two ton of fish to a boat is reckoned a tolerably successful fishery; in Zetland, the average quantity is only one ton. This comparison shews the advantage that may be expected from encouraging the west-highland boat fishery.

The

The price of cod is from 1½d. to 2d.; p. 380.
 ling, 3½ and 4d. When the fish are sold at that rate, it is obvious to every enquiring mind, that the fishery by vessels never can be carried on to advantage without bounty; and I have already endeavoured to shew, the great expence it would be to Government compared to the probable quantity taken.

But although these prices appear low, the exporter of fish to the Mediterranean cannot afford higher, to enable him to sell on the same terms as the Newfoundland fishery.

It is said that at the Isle of Martin 20,000 cod were caught in a season, which cost the merchants when delivered in London, 6d.: this I am satisfied is accurate; but the sales mentioned in the Report were wonderfully successful, and must have been attended with very uncommon circumstances.

A very considerable fishery of dog fish is carried on at Stornaway, which is profitable, from the quantity of oil made from the liver. The increase of boats will assist in this; and in other respects it is to be wished, that this fishery be carried on ex-

tensively, to diminish, if possible, these shoals of fish, which are so destructive to the herrings.

REGULATIONS RESPECTING THE DUTY ON FISH.

P. 94. 116.
397. 236.
395.

By the present law, dried fish intituled to bounty, must measure above 14 inches. In my opinion however, there ought to be no exception with regard to size, especially as the small are best fitted for the Italian market, and according to their weight ought to have the same attention from Government. The bounties too which are granted on dried fish are lower than those upon herrings: the bounty upon the barrel of herrings is 2s. 8d. and the value is about 20s. whereas the barrel of cod is worth 30s. and the bounty is only 2s. — these ought to be rendered more equal in proportion to their respective values. It is proposed by the Committee to take off all duties on fish used at home; this will, if carried into effect, increase the consumption very much, by extending the sale of it among all ranks of people.

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It is very well known, that the sale of kitted salmon was small while the prices were high; now that the price is so reduced, as to make it the food of almost all ranks of people in London, the consumption is very great, and has enabled the fishmonger to extend his trade to the extremity of Scotland.

The proposed regulation will, in the same manner contribute very much to the extension of the fisheries, as there is no market that will ever be so agreeable to the adventurer as a home one.

The Iceland fisherman brings his fish to market without paying any duty, and it ought to be the same with regard to all fish. The extension of the fishery will require the aid of every market that can be thought of. It will be farther of great advantage, that the curer be at liberty to use duty-free salt for fish cured for home consumption: by this means he will not only save the duty on the salt really used, but also on the quantity wasted or embezzled, an object by no means inconsiderable upon a commodity which is left entirely in the hands of servants, and so liable to both.

The quantity of white herrings exported
from England at an average of 32 years

p. 124, 125. is - - - - 7,908 barrels.

From Scotland - - - 28,858

36,766

If, by the improvement of the fisheries, or by the shoals of herrings coming on our coast as in former times, the quantity caught should be double, the adventurer will be diffculted to find a market; and how much more will he be so, if the quantity ever approaches that of the Swedish fishery, where the average quantity caught in a season has been about 120,000 barrels? The expediency of this measure will be equally strong with regard to the fishery of cod, ling, and tusk; and I may farther observe, the Dutch do not charge any duty on salt made use of on the fish caught by themselves. The same indulgence should be given in the case of beef and pork.

It is the opinion of some persons, that it would be expedient to give all the bounty on the barrel of herrings exported, as in this case, Government would pay value for what
was

was really caught: this would be of great advantage to the coast and boat fishing in the Firth of Forth and other places; but I cannot approve of it in other respects. — Bounties should be proportioned, in some measure, to the expence the adventurer is at. It would not be reasonable to give the same encouragement to a boat fitted out at a small expence, and where the people employed live at home, as to a bus fitted out at a very great expence, perhaps of 1000l., and manned by seamen on months pay and provision — I say it would be unjust to place both on the same footing, which giving *all* the bounty on the barrel would do. As the law now stands the bounty on the barrel gives a sufficient *general* encouragement to the boat and bus fisherman, while an additional bounty ought to be given to the bus fisherman, on account of his *particular* situation.

P R E M I U M S.

I find these recommended by the Committee as a proper encouragement to the fishermen in boats, and it is supposed they would make

p. 62, 63.
115. 213.

make them more industrious and enterprising—I allow most readily the force of this proposition if that rank of people could be brought to understand it, and that the chances of obtaining the premiums were such as to keep the spirit alive.

But independent of these considerations, I do not see it practicable to ascertain the quantities caught by each boat—The fishermen live along the coast, where there is no person to keep a cheque on them; their own account therefore must be taken, and the public would be exposed to fraud and deception: many devices would be fallen upon to satisfy a conscience not over scrupulous. For example, two or three boats' crews living in one place might agree, that though they set their lines separately, one boatmaster should draw them and call it his own fishing, and by that means escape detection; the premiums will most probably fall to the lot of the greatest knaves, and not to that of the industrious honest fisherman.

If so great a sum as 200l., or even 40l., comes to the share of one boat's crew, it would (if it came into the pockets of the fisher-

fishermen) probably be spent in dissipation, or make the more sober part of them, who are naturally prone to inactivity, give up the profession altogether.

I imagine, however, that when the connections between the land proprietors and the fishermen are duly considered, it will appear, that these high premiums would inevitably come into the pockets of the former.

While there is on the one hand the knowledge and strong attention of the proprietor or merchant to his interest, and on the other the ignorance and the indolence of the fisherman, it may be easily discovered who will be the gainer — the fisherman will receive a small acknowledgement with which he would be satisfied: and he will consider this pittance as a present from his master, not as a bounty arising from the benevolence of Government — In short, I cannot help thinking, that these premiums will hold forth a strong temptation to fraud and deception, and I must unwillingly add that of perjury; if the proof should be put to the issue of an oath, with regard to the public, no cheque can be found to prevent
those

those evils: As to the premium to decked vessels, while the number fitted out in the fishery for cod and ling are few, and they have such a chance of the premium as will correspond to what I apprehend is the certain loss on the voyage without the premium, they will go on; but should the number increase, and the chance for the premium become less, the trade would be given up — For example, 10 vessels are fitted out with a view to the premiums, which amount to 1000l., this would correspond on chances to 100l. each, and to 50l. each if the number was doubled; this with the fishery might do; but whenever the number went considerably beyond this, the adventurers finding a constant loss on the trade which was not made up by the chance of the premium, would tire and give it up.

Premiums are also proposed by Dr. Anderson for the best cured herrings. The specimen to consist of one last. These competitions, I am afraid, would not answer the views of the public; so small a quantity would probably be brought forward by the curer who had the least to do; having

having a small quantity to manage, he will bestow more time and pains to prepare his fish for the competition, while the great curer, from his having so much to do, would not have the same opportunity. The premiums proposed would answer very well, if they could be bestowed upon the curer who, on the whole, sent his herrings to market in the best order ; but I am at a loss to discover how that could be ascertained.

CURER'S MARK.

THIS I consider as very proper ; and all barrels exported ought to have the exporter's name ; which would bring his reputation under the public view, and make it his interest to attend carefully to the cure of the fish he exported.

BARRELS.

IT is the interest of the exporter that the barrel staves be half an inch thick ; and the public is entitled, when they give a bounty, to have the fish in the best kind of package.

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P. 177. It is said that the Irish herrings, in barrels of 28 gallons each, sell at the same price with those from Britain in barrels of 32 gallons each. I do not well understand how this can be; but, taking the fact as stated, I must consider it a deception on the purchaser; and that, instead of reducing the size of British barrels, it might be as well to prohibit the importation of herrings to the West Indies in barrels containing under 32 gallons, which would put the British and Irish fishermen on the same footing, and rectify the deception, which the purchaser in the West Indies appears to lie under. If Government should lower the size to 28 gallons for herrings exported, it would, in some measure, contribute towards the deception upon the buyers abroad.

S A L T L A W S.

I FIND it stated in the Report, that the salt laws, as they now stand, are considered as doing very material injury to the fisheries in Scotland; in the opinions of many, their future prosperity depends upon some alteration in them taking place; and the

the Committee have recommended, in P. 113, 114. very strong terms, to the House, that the duty should be commuted over all Scotland, both to relieve the fishermen from the duties, and from the still-more-distressing circumstances which accompany that indulgence from duty, (free salt) viz. vexatious bonds and penalties. In considering this matter, it does not appear to me that the witnesses examined before the Committee had under their consideration the quantity of foreign salt made use of in the fishery. Dr. Smith (to whose information and authority I must ever pay the most profound respect) states, page 106, that the quantity of foreign salt made use of by the fish curers, from April, 1771, to April, 1782, was 936,974 bushels, at 84 lb. each; that, in the same time, there was only made use of 168,226 bushels of British salt, at 56lb. each. To bring both in point of weight under the same denomination, the quantity of foreign salt used in that time was 1,405,461 bushels, at 56lb. per bushel, while that of British salt was only 168,226 bushels. The average quantity in one year is, of foreign salt, 127,769 bushels, of 56lb.,

while that of British is only 15,290 bushels, of 56lb.: then the quantity of foreign salt is eight times more than that of British salt.

On the establishment of those facts, one of two things must follow: if the Legislature means, by commuting, to allow the free use of foreign salt as well as of British salt, the obvious consequence will be the destruction of the salt works. The quality of the foreign salt, and its cheapness, will induce the inhabitants to make use of it not only for fish curing, but for every other purpose.

If the Legislature intend, when they commute, to prohibit the use of foreign salt, the fisherman would complain loudly that he was deprived of the means to make the best cure of his herrings, and that the British salt cannot carry the fish in safety to the West Indies.

It must then follow, to save the British salt works from ruin, and at the same time to accommodate the fisherman, that liberty must be given to use foreign salt *duty free*, under certain restrictions, as at present. Taking it, therefore, on this ground, by
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the proposed relief of doing away the duty by commutation, the fisherman will only be relieved one-ninth part, and for the other eighth-ninths of his salt he must remain under the same distress of bonds as at present.

How far a commutation of the salt duty may, from other circumstances, be useful to the public, is not at present under my consideration, nor do I pretend to judge of it in so extensive a point of view. But with regard to the fisheries, it cannot be of consequence, as the utmost relief the fisherman can expect is for a small proportion of what he uses, while he must remain under the same fetters as to the rest; I say the fisherman can only expect this, unless Government think that the British salt manufactory ought to give way to the interest of the fishery.

But however, great relief may be given to the fishermen in Scotland, by adopting the English practice of bonding once a year; and when the fisherman ships off any for his fishery, he gives a certificate under his hand that the quantity on board such a vessel or boat is part of his stock. In this way,
without

without any bond but the first, he carries his salt where he pleases, accompanied by his own certificate, and at the end of the season settles the account in the usual way, and grants a new bond. If any certificates are wanting for fish exported, six months time ought to be given to the fish-curer to produce them; and the quantity wanting ought to be marked upon the back of the new bond, as a charge against him till it is produced. For the farther ease of the fishermen, it ought to be enacted, that all bonds for salt or fish carried coastways, or exported, be written on paper not stamped. This would remove a great deal of the expence complained of by the different witnesses examined before the Committee.

The fees on all fish transactions might be put upon more reasonable terms; yet I must in candour say, that when Government give bounties so liberally to the fishery, the officer ought to be paid his fees without any grumbling on the part of the fish-curer, nor ought the curer to scruple the trouble he is put to in preventing fraud in the use of duty-free salt, when Government has so liberally indulged him
in

in the use of foreign and home-made salt at his option; and he will have still less reason to do so, if the Legislature follow up their present resolutions of allowing fish of all kinds to be cured with duty-free salt for home consumption, as recommended by the Committee.

R O C K S A L T.

IT is recommended to allow the introduction of rock salt into Scotland. I am satisfied that this measure would, in some degree, lower the price of salt. Rock salt is sold at Liverpool at various prices, according to the quality. What is exported to Flanders costs, free on board, 9s. 6d. per ton, reckoning 23 cwt. 14 lb. to the ton. If it is to be transported to Scotland, the account will stand thus:

Prime cost — — £. 0 9 6

If it is to be transported to the salt

works on the west of Scotland,

I must calculate the freight at

8s. per ton, of 20 cwt., which

per ton of 23 cwt. is — 0 9 0

Carried over 0 18 6

Very

Brought over £. 0 18 6

Very few falt works are situated at harbours; the distances are so different, that I do not know how to estimate the expence of carrying the rock falt to them. But an expence of landing and warehousing must attend the delivery at the harbour of any such article; rec-

kon per ton	—	—	0	1	6
			£.	1	0 0

I am informed, that from 23 to 24 cwt. of rock falt, with good management, will give 20 cwt. of falt, or 40 bushels; then the above will cost per bushel, 6d.

Lord Dundonald, in his very ingenious treatise on falt, states, that one bushel of falt in the Firth of Forth costs 11d. This, however, depends on the quality of the coal, which varies in the proportions of 7 to 10.

I think his Lordship has taken it low enough; and though some coal works may be

be lower than is stated, there are more above it.

His Lordship states farther, that the expence of coals and labour on rock salt is not above the one-eighth part of that which is made from sea water. In this proportion, the expence of coal and labour is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. per bushel; so that a bushel of salt upon the west coast would cost $7\frac{1}{2}$ d. per bushel; but it will be a safer calculation to call it 8d.

If the salt is to be made from rock in the Firth of Forth, then must be added the additional freight, which cannot be reckoned under double the other, and is therefore an extra charge of 9s. per ton of 23 cwt. that being, as before stated, the nominal ton of raw materials, which is $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. per bushel, and of course one bushel of salt, made from rock, will cost $10\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the Firth of Forth. In making these calculations, I have proceeded on very moderate principles. The great article is the freight of salt from Liverpool to the Firth of Forth. I state it at 16s. per ton of 20 cwt. which alone is 5d. per bushel.

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I believe this will be reckoned very moderate, as little reliance is to be placed on the accidental circumstances of retour freights, which are very few; and as I have not reckoned any insurance or waste, which are on such an article very considerable.

Dr. Anderfon states, that there will be a saving of freight when the canal is finished. How this will be, I cannot exactly say, as it will be only a canal for the navigation of small flat-bottomed vessels, which are not well calculated to carry such an article as salt; nor do I imagine, when the lock dues are paid, that the savings will be very considerable; as the saving cannot be above 3s. per ton, which is one third of the additional freight, about 1d. per bushel.

On the whole, it is evident that a bushel of salt made in the Firth of Forth from the rock will cost, by coming round Scotland, 10½d. per bushel, and on the idea of coming by the canal, 9¾d.; I think, at an average, it may be taken at 10d.

At present the proprietors of salt works, to encourage the fishery, supply the fish curers at 10d. which is below its real value; but

but they are only enabled to grant this indulgence, as they get a better price by home sale.

It now remains to consider what are the advantages and disadvantages.

It will be of advantage to the west country, as they will get their salt at 8d.

Lord Dundonald states the great advantage that refining salt will be to the coal works on the Firth of Forth from the additional quantity which will be made; but, with all submission to his Lordship, I apprehend he is mistaken. p. 26.

I am very well acquainted with every market in and out of the Baltic, and I venture to say, with some degree of confidence, that unless it be at an accidental period, there is not one which will neat the exporter 8d. per bushel for his salt, charging the account with freight at 5s. per ton, which is as low as it can be calculated for vessels going to the port of sale, and taking the salt with them from the Firth of Forth instead of ballast. I advance this from sales I have made, and the information I have had from a great number of ports: and if this be the case, how can the salt maker make a profit by a commodity which ac-

tually costs him 10d., without reckoning any thing for the use of his salt works.

The same right honourable author states the cost of salt from sea water to be 11d. If rock salt costs 10d. the difference is so small, that it is not an object either of public or private attention.

The quantity of salt made in Scotland is about 350,000 bushels in the year, which requires 100,000 tons of coal, and employs 100 salt pans. I have shewn that the quantity of salt from the rock cannot be increased with the view of making for exportation: then the refining of rock salt must be for the consumption of the country. If it is taken in this view, on the computation of one-eighth fuel and labour, there will be a consumption of only 12,500 tons of coals. It must follow that 87,000 tons of coals remain undisposed of, and it will also follow, that a great number of pans will have nothing to do, and the people be sent adrift. This must be the consequence, unless it can be proved that the salt works can make salt for exportation from rock, which I consider as impossible: then what is to become of the 87,000 tons
of

of small coal. Every person who is acquainted with the nature of Scots coals knows that (unless in a very few instances indeed) it is not of a caking quality, and is totally unfit for any purpose except lime burning, and making of bricks and tiles; the consumption in these articles is not considerable, and is already supplied over and above the 100,000 tons, I have mentioned, used for the making of salt. As I do not know any one purpose to which this surplus quantity of coals can be applied, it must therefore be lost. In some works it will be left below ground, and in others, where there is a considerable quantity of sulphur mixed with the coal, it must be brought to the surface and burnt, to prevent it becoming a nuisance.

Some coal works, therefore, not being able to lose such a proportion of their coals, must give up, and leave it to those more happily situated to go on as they best can. The country at large will feel this, since all the loss must be charged upon the coals sold by the works, which may remain. At present the coal owner gets 2s. or 2s. 6d. per ton for his small coal,

coal, by converting it into salt. If he is deprived of this, he must add that loss to the other coals he sells, or give up his works. In England the case is very different, as the greatest part of the coals are of a caking quality, and the small, (which is of so little value in Scotland) is nearly of equal value with the large. This is so much the case at the great works in the north of England, both on the east and west coast, that large and small coals are mixed all together, and in that state are more valuable than the large coal is in Scotland.

The distress that will arise to the coal works in Scotland is obvious; but what are the advantages that will accrue to the fisheries? I have already stated the quantity of Scots salt used in a season to be about 15,000 bushels. Suppose there is saved by the introduction of rock salt 2d. per bushel, this will amount only to 125l. per annum. But go still farther, and suppose that the whole quantity of salt used in the fisheries was British, (to the entire exclusion of foreign salt) the whole saving upon 193,059 bushels would only be 1192l.

to

to save which sum to the fisheries, ruin is brought on the coal works, and the price of coals is increased, to the prejudice of the very country meant to be benefitted; thus what is given with one hand is taken away with the other, and the north of Scotland is distressed by raising the price of their fuel, which is a much greater injury to the country and its improvement, than will be compensated by any advantages which it will receive from the reduced price of salt.

But in considering the introduction of rock salt, thus favourably, I have supposed the fisheries to be confined to the use of British salt, which I fancy would produce more well-grounded cause of complaint, than is now made for the want of the introduction of rock salt.

I pay a great respect to what Lord Dundonald proposes upon the subject of refining salt: but I will never advise the fish curer to abandon the use of foreign salt until the salt makers in Britain can bring forward a quantity of salt which he is satisfied will answer the purpose equally well. In my experience, I have by slow boiling made salt
of

of equal strength with foreign salt, and freed it entirely from the bittern; but still it had not such size or strength of particle as to make it equal to the foreign. In the packing of herrings I think these requisites are necessary to make the fish keep, in a warm climate. The soft salt melts away, the fine particles of foreign salt does not, but remains between the layers of fish and preserves them. As I do not recommend it to the fish-curer, I cannot advise the public to say to the curer, you must use British refined salt for the encouragement of British salt works, when I do not know any of this sort of salt is actually made any where.

But if, after all, it appears to the Committee, that rock salt ought to be introduced into Scotland, I hope they will, from the known justice of the country, indemnify the proprietors of the coal and salt works.

I have taken the liberty of differing with Lord Dundonald, and I am at the same time perfectly satisfied, that his Lordship, with his usual candour, will agree with me if he discovers he has been misinformed; on the

the other hand, I shall be happy to be set right if I am mistaken in my ideas. I wish to bring forward plain and simple truths for the information of the Committee; and though I appear in both the capacities of a fish curer and a salt proprietor, I should be sorry to raise either of them at the expence of the other, but by holding a middle course, endeavour to nourish both.

LOBSTER FISHERY.

This trade has increased very much, and still it appears that the market of London is not yet properly supplied. I have been long connected with the House late Mr. Kittermasters, and now Messrs. Selby and Cresswell's, in this trade — I must observe, in justice to them, that this county is greatly indebted to the very spirited manner in which they have carried on this branch so lucrative to the country; and the city of London is also indebted to them for the regular supplies they have brought forward; as to any improvements in this

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branch,

branch, I cannot do better than leave them to the consideration of these gentlemen.

C A N A L S.

On this subject I have only to suggest, that if there is an expectation, that the fishermen will pass from the west to the east coast, and from the east to the west, there ought to be a clause added to the bill lately passed giving the canal betwixt the Forth and the Clyde a large sum from the annexed estates, by which it may be enacted, that all vessels or boats passing either way in prosecution of the fisheries shall pass free of lock dues.

B A I T.

Liberty ought to be given to the fishermen to procure bait from every shore, but not from rivers.

T O W N S.

p. 52. 209. Building towns, and collecting fishermen and others to inhabit them is also strongly recom-

recommended. That a large town is very beneficial to the commonwealth and more particularly so to the proprietors of the estates near which it is situated, must be obvious to every person—Doctor Anderson, in a very masterly manner, points out the many advantages arising from such establishments. It is proposed that 1000*l.* should be given to any proprietor as soon as 1000 *fews* are established. But I cannot think that any proprietor will be tempted with such an expectation of public money.

From the same author I find, that Old Meldrum has sprung up in the course of this century, it contains from three to four hundred houses, and is spoken of as an example. It must be admitted that it is at least as favourably situated as most parts in the West Highlands, and many people would say much more so: therefore, if in this town it has taken near a century to establish 3 or 400 *fews*, no land owner can expect in the West Highlands, that his town will go on with three times the rapidity: and even if it should, he must wait near a century for the 1000*l.* promised by Government.

p. 161, 171. It is supposed, that such towns may be inhabited by a number of fishermen, and that they will become the chief settlers. When we consider the very great poverty of this class of men on the west coast, I cannot see that they have either the means of building a house, or laying out money sufficient for the encouragement of tradesmen: their clothes are spun by their families; the girdle comes in place of the oven, and I believe in the article of shoes the brogue is preferred.

p. 386.

It must indeed be a very long time before the fisherman is in such opulence as to give up the present method of supplying himself, and resort to the shopkeeper, baker, and shoemaker, for what he needs for himself and his family. But suppose him in this state, having got over his local attachment for his native place, and that by the benevolence of Government, he is in a reasonable time not only enabled to be an independent sewer, but an useful member of society, by promoting the different branches of manufacture. I should even then differ in opinion as to the propriety of bringing this useful body of men to one town instead of their inhabiting different villages along the coast. Would

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it not appear odd, for example, to collect all the fishermen on the banks of the Forth, to one or two places? the fishermen will tell you, they are better situated as they are for carrying on their fishery, and to remove them to a distance would be greatly to their prejudice.

I do not know any arguments that could be made use of to induce them to make the change: and if you were to reason on the advantage arising to them from living together in large towns, they would not understand you. How much stronger must the case be in the west highlands, a thinly-inhabited coast, compared with that I have mentioned, where, to establish a town of fishermen, such as is proposed, would require the depopulation of a very considerable extent of coast.

The proper situation, I apprehend, for the habitations of the fishermen, should be near the fishing ground; this is exemplified by the keenness with which farms near the fishing banks are sought after on the west coast; and it is from the same reason, that in Zetland the value of a gentleman's estate depends

depends on its convenient situation for the fishery.

Fishermen in detached situations are particularly useful in discovering the shoals of herrings as they set in; every one looks out for them in his own district, and can make trials without the trouble and expence of going from home: this is the case in the Firth of Forth, and will be the same every where, especially in a wide and extended coast; and were the morals of the fishermen to be taken into the consideration, I should prefer their living in detached villages along the shore rather than in a large and populous town.

p. 210.

I agree entirely in opinion with Dr. Anderson, that a fisherman and a farmer ought not to be the same person; it is the interest of both professions to be separated. But when I see that in Zetland, the fisherman can only be employed for the summer months in the fishery, and that in the west highlands they do not at present, and will not probably for a very long time, find occupation for the whole of the year, it is better they should have something to do than that they remain idle, although they make
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but wretched farmers. These occupations must go together until the fisherman, becoming more industrious in his proper vocation, discovers employment for himself all the year through; this is the case in many places in Scotland, and in time I hope it will be more universal. It is the interest of the proprietor to encourage this separation, in a country where there is a greater number of hands than there is employment for — If a fisherman is employed all the year round, he is bringing treasure from the deep to improve the estate on which he lives, while the farmer can very easily manage the additional quantity of ground given up by the fisherman, and will gladly purchase from him the dung which his trade introduces.

LIGHT HOUSES AND LAND MARKS.

These are useful and beneficial both to the fishermen and the coasting trade, in so very dangerous a navigation.

T A X

TAX ON COALS.

There is no tax so impolitic as this, the rule ought to have been reversed — those at hand ought to have paid, and those at a distance been exempted. The duty over Scotland is very trifling, and by a general taxation the evil would be remedied. Several expedients have been proposed; a tax at the pits has been thought of, but it may be difficult to collect, and still more so to establish with equality, according to the respective values of the coals and the situations of the different coal works. I apprehend it would be more equal to tax the chimneys, and exempt all houses having but one: this will fall mostly on the wealthy, who ought to pay in proportion to the number of their chimneys a higher ratio of tax, while the exemption proposed will relieve the lower ranks of people. I believe a very small tax on the chimneys will answer the purpose, when their number is compared with the sum to be raised.

C O M.

COMMUTATION ON MALT.

It is proposed, that the commutation on salt and coals be laid upon this article. I advise every wellwisher to his country to beware of such a plan: it has ever with justice been said, that the barley in Scotland is of such inferior quality as not to be an object of taxation when compared with the English barley, and this tax will fall heaviest on the north country which it is meant to serve, on account of the still greater inferiority of their grain.

BRITISH REFINED SALT.

THE use of this is much approved of by the Dutch, and it would be of great service on board of the vessels fitted out to fish in the North Sea. The bounty vessels should be obliged to take it for the cure of their herrings; and it would be well worth the attention of the public to give as much per bushel premium as will bring it to the price of common salt for the use of these vessels. To prevent imposition, Government, through the means of the different Boards, must

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bargain as low as they can with works conveniently situated to supply the fishermen at a stated price, according to samples; these samples to be lodged at the Custom House near which the salt work is situated. The owner or master of the fishing vessel will be a check on the quality, as it will be his interest to get the best, for which he must pay a fixed price to the salt works, according to the bargain made by the public. Refined British salt is very well calculated for European markets.

In considering the different matters contained in the Report, I have proceeded upon the evidence and correspondence brought forward by the Committee. It is on these authorities that I have chiefly founded my observations, as may be seen by the references in the margin. I observe that the Committee are inclined to think that my partiality to the boat fishery may arise from my local situation. It is almost impossible for the mind of man not to be warped by such prejudices. I can only say, that on considering my situation, as carrying on at Dunbar a very extensive cure of red and white herrings, and on the coast of Caithness

ness and Sutherland that of cod and ling, I cannot be suspected of self interest, when I press so anxiously on the minds of the Committee a liberal bounty for the increase of the boat fishery on the west and north-west coast of Scotland, and, comparatively speaking, so little to those on the east. In like manner to the huss fishery on the North Sea, a trade, I have already stated, which will probably fall into the hands of the Yarmouth fishermen.

On the whole, I have endeavoured, with all the impartiality in my power, to state such things as I imagine will be the most useful to the fishermen of this country, the prosperity of whom my house has, in some degree, endeavoured to forward for near a century past.

I hope the Committee will forgive me where I have taken the liberty of offering sentiments different from theirs: I must also request the indulgence of those gentlemen who have so fully and ably written on the subject.

I apprehend the reason of my being desired to consider the Report was to collect observations and opinions from different

people, that the Committee, having such before them, might proceed in the manner which to their wisdom should seem meet.

If these pages should attract the attention of any of the gentlemen who have written on the subject, and they will take the trouble of pointing out wherein I am either mistaken or misinformed, I request they will lay their thoughts before the Committee. It is not my meaning to enter into a controversy, but simply to state what occurs to me; and if other gentlemen do the same, the Committee will be able to judge whether any thing has been suggested deserving of their attention.

APPEN-

A P P E N D I X.

Third Report of the Committee appointed to inquire into the State of the British Fisheries, Page 62.

AS a farther inducement to industrious exertions, let a set of premiums be appropriated annually to the ten boats in each district, which should prove that they had caught the greatest value of fish during the preceding year, in proportion to the size of the boat, and number of men employed therein; that is to say,

To the First best-fished boat	£. 40	0	0
Second do.	—	20	0 0
Third do.	—	10	0 0
Fourth do.	—	8	0 0
Fifth do.	—	6	0 0
Sixth do.	—	5	0 0
Seventh do.	—	4	0 0
Eighth do.	—	3	0 0
Ninth do.	—	2	10 0
Tenth do.	—	1	10 0
		£. 100	0 0
			These

These premiums to be ascertained by a jury of respectable persons in each district, upon the first Monday of June annually.

In order to prevent frauds as much as possible in competing for these premiums, and otherwise, let it be required by law, that no boat, or other vessel, shall sell or give over to any other boat, or other person at sea, or otherwise, (unless in a retail way, as at market) under a certain penalty, any kind of fish, or other articles, the produce of the fisheries, above the value of to one person at a time, without obtaining a written receipt from the person to whom they are delivered, in which receipt shall be specified the name and designation of the purchase, the time when, and place where delivered, the number of the boat, name of the owner, and that of the district to which the boat belonged from which the fish were purchased, with the quantity of fish, and price paid for them. These receipts and accounts (in which accounts shall be particularly specified the whole quantities of fish either bought or sold during the former year, entered in a regular journal, with the names
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of the buyers, or of the persons to whom sold, unless in retail at market) to be given in in a public manner to the jury, and to be sustained as evidence in competing for the premiums; but if it shall appear that these accounts are in any one article false, the person who has thus falsified the account shall be excluded from obtaining any premium for that time.

○ And with a view farther to guard against frauds, let it be ordered, that in case it shall be discovered at any time, after a premium has been paid, that any fraud or unfair means has been taken for obtaining it, the person who so obtained that premium shall be rendered incapable of competing for any other premium ever afterwards.

To give a still greater stimulus to the exertions of industry, let another set of premiums be distributed annually to the ten boats which, in proportion to their size, and the number of men, should be found to be the most successful in the whole of the districts on the coast. These premiums to be determined at Edinburgh each year, on the first Monday of August, by the trustees for fisheries, &c. from the returns
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of the quantities, and value of fish, caught by the boats obtaining all the premiums in each of the districts. Such returns being required to be made to them for this purpose immediately after the distribution of the premiums of the districts. These premiums to be for

The First best	—	£. 200	0	0
Second do.	—	100	0	0
Third do.	—	80	0	0
Fourth do.	—	60	0	0
Fifth do.	—	50	0	0
Sixth do.	—	40	0	0
Seventh do.	—	30	0	0
Eighth do.	—	20	0	0
Ninth do.	—	12	0	0
Tenth do.	—	8	0	0
Total		£. 600	0	0

In consequence of this arrangement, it must happen that a few poor industrious men, without friends or powerful connections of any kind, would receive at once the amazing sum of 240l., the hope of obtaining which would excite a degree of vigour and exertion of which it is difficult to form an idea. Thousands of persons would
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look up to this as to a prize in the lottery, which was to confer wealth and independence on themselves and their posterity for ever. It would be a lottery, however, the prize of which could only be obtained by labour, perseverance, and skill: it would be a lottery, too, of such a kind as would not tend to impoverish, but rather to enrich the unsuccessful adventurers, as they would be benefited by their own exertions, even though they had not reached the top of the scale; and each individual might indulge the enlivening hope, that though he had not been the most successful this season, yet that in consequence of more vigorous exertions, aided by the superior skill he had acquired by practice, he might obtain the prize next year. In this way, therefore, a very small sum of money excites an amazing deal of industry, and thus produces the most beneficial effects upon the community.

The gentlemen of the Committee will please also here to advert to the consequences that will naturally result to the community afterwards from the money thus obtained. In this way a great addition will be made to the capital of those fishermen whose practi-

cal knowledge of that business is the greatest; and to those men who, from having been successful in that business, have the greatest desire to prosecute it with vigour; consequently it will happen that every shilling of that money will be applied to the farther improvement of the fisheries, and applied with the utmost œconomy in that very way that is calculated to produce the greatest effect possible. Men who began with small boats will thus be enabled to obtain larger vessels of the kind which experience proves to be the best. In this manner, though at first sight our plan seemed calculated only to encourage the boat fishery, yet it now appears to be well calculated to promote the fishery in larger vessels, if experience shall prove that those are the most useful. By this mode of procedure, knowledge always precedes the outlay of capital, and by consequence that capital will always be laid out with that judicious caution which effectually insures success. A gradual progression from small to great is thus established, which, when once fairly begun, can scarcely be interrupted in its progress.

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That industry may be kept awake, and emulation excited in these larger vessels, it would also be right to appropriate another set of premiums, on the same plan, to those vessels, from 15 tons and upwards, that were employed in the fisheries within the districts aforesaid. One set of premiums on the whole coasts would be enough for this purpose; and these might be as under, viz.

To the First best fished, in proportion to its size and the number of persons employed in it	—	£. 500	0	0
To the Second do.	—	200	0	0
Third do.	—	100	0	0
Fourth do.	—	60	0	0
Fifth do.	—	40	0	0
Sixth do.	—	30	0	0
Seventh do.	—	25	0	0
Eighth do.	—	20	0	0
Ninth do.	—	15	0	0
Tenth do.	—	10	0	0

Total £. 1000 0 0

In a few years the bounty on the tonnage, which requires a much greater fund, and is less calculated to promote industry,

may be with safety withdrawn, and these premiums continued, under such farther restrictions as experience may point out as necessary.

For this description of vessels nothing but fish themselves produced, or receipts for those that have been sold or given away, will be received, and an account must be delivered upon oath of all fish, &c. that have been bought from others, specifying the time when bought, the person from whom, the place where, the quantity, kind, and price, (a copy of which account, any person desiring it, may be at liberty to take) from which vouchers the value of the fish, &c. caught by each candidate, shall be ascertained. Before payment of the premium each candidate shall give bond, with sufficient surety, for the amount of the premium, with one half more, to be forfeited in case any frauds in those accounts or vouchers shall be proved within one year from that period, after which time the bond shall be no longer in force. And in case of the forfeiture of any of these bonds, the amount of the original premium thus forfeited shall be given to the person on the list who
stands

stands next below him, and each of those below to occupy the class which he would have held had the premium forfeited never been adjudged; and of course that the lowest premium shall be adjudged to the vessel which was highest upon the list of those who did not obtain the premium. With regard to the sum forfeited more than the premium, it shall be divided into as many parts as it will admit of, each equal to the lowest premium; and if any fraction remains, that fraction shall form another share: these shares to be distributed in order to the vessels which were not gainers, but which stood highest on the list next to those. By this means it would become the interest of those who were best able to discover frauds, to detect them, and of course it would be very dangerous to attempt any kind of fraud in these competitions.

As the extension of these fisheries must, in a great measure, depend on the large demand for fish, it is of much importance that the people should be induced to cure them as carefully as possible: and with a view to excite a very general attention to this article, let a set of premiums be distributed

tributed annually to the persons who should produce the best sorted and best cured white herrings, viz.

For the first best sorted and best cured specimen of British-caught white herrings (consisting of one last each specimen) — — £. 100 0 0

To the second do. — — 50 0 0

Third do. — — 40 0 0

Fourth do. — — 30 0 0

Fifth do. — — 25 0 0

Sixth do. — — 20 0 0

Seventh do. — — 15 0 0

Eighth do. — — 10 0 0

Ninth do. — — 6 0 0

Tenth do. — — 4 0 0

£. 300 0 0

The gainers of each of these premiums to produce to the judges, if they desire it, a particular account of the whole steps in the process of curing the fish, which they may publish if they shall so incline. And on all occasions the names of the gainers of these premiums, the district to which they belong, and the number of the vessel marked

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ed on the barrels, shall be published in the news-papers.

Appendix, No. 16. to the Report from the Committee appointed to inquire into the State of the British Fisheries, Page 260.

“ THOUGHTS on the Herring Fishery,”
from Mr. Robert Fall, of Dunbar.

THE Government of Britain have shewn a readiness to promote the fisheries of the country, and at present there appears a very strong inclination to give this branch of our commerce every encouragement in their power. It is needless to enter into the reasons which, at this period, operate so strongly on the minds of those who wish well to their country—We have lost a great empire, and it is now more our duty than ever to encourage our commerce at home, which will not only bring wealth and health to
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the constitution, but prevent emigration to a country which has not only deserted us, but their own real interest.

The herring fishing has been at all times considered as the natural trade of the country, but it has been much neglected by individuals, as in the eye of the merchant other branches of commerce have presented themselves with more promising advantages than could be expected from a trade which requires the patience and industry of Dutchmen to follow out. If the inhabitants of Britain were possessed with these qualities, long before this the Dutch fishing would have been rivalled, and the trade in the hand of the British merchant—But as the natural genius of the people is of a different cast, and that it is very difficult for any set of men to get forward in trade, which has been carried on by skilful and industrious men, Government have most generously and politically given bounties to assist and bring forward branches of fishing; by this encouragement the Greenland fishery at this moment bids fair, not only to rival, but to outstrip the Dutch, who had so long, in a manner,

manner, the monopoly of that valuable branch.

In Holland, the herring fishery is called the great fishing, and the other the small fishing.

Along the coast of Britain, the herrings make their arrival early ; but (to our shame be it spoken) the Dutch have the most valuable part of that trade.

In speaking of the herring fishing, we must consider it in two points of view—the coast fishing, by which is meant the herrings caught along the shore, in the lochs and firths ; the other is carried on in deep water. The Dutch are in the entire possession of that, from their patience, industry, and frugality.

The first of these fishings is carried on by boats, the last by ships.

Government has given considerable bounties, from time to time, to encourage the herring fishing ; first 50s. per ton, and now 30 s. These bounties have brought forward many adventurers on the west coast of Scotland, to carry on a fishing with small vessels, which are employed to carry boats from place to place, where the herrings may

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swarm,

swarm, with salt and cask, to cure them. This fishing is altogether coast fishing, as no busses, fitted in this manner, ever fishes herrings in the way they are caught in deep water. The encouragement given to this fishing has been very useful to the country, and well deserves the farther countenance and encouragement of Government.

The farther encouragement of the coast fishing I consider of the utmost consequence to Britain; but in the application of bounty I beg leave to point out the boat fishing, the encouragement of which, has hitherto escaped the public notice. The bounty, as now given, is to decked vessels, and excludes open boats: though it is well known, that these vessels do not fish themselves, for it is by the use of boats they get their herrings. I suppose the most perfect state of a fishing vessel would be, that every man aboard the vessel had an equal share of the ship, nets, and materials; the consequence would be the utmost frugality and industry. The want of a capital and enterprise has, and must effectually prevent so perfect a plan as this; we must, therefore, look for this society in another state.—In the boat fishing,
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the boat and nets, for the most part, belong to the crew, and here you have a vessel in miniature, but with powers to do great things in the fishing way, as every man's frugality and industry is called into full exertion.

Government wisely assists the decked vessel, but why not forward the boat fishing, which is carried on on more simple principles, and by a set of people who will exert themselves to the utmost? I would humbly propose, that boats of proper dimensions for carrying on the fishing, and having on board a master and two fishers, with a sufficient quantity of nets, should rendezvous in the same manner as the busses, be obliged to fish the same time, and in all respects be under the same regulation as the vessels, so far as regards their doing the duty of fishers; and that each master and fisher so employed, and fishing the full time, shall receive from Government 40s. per man. I do not mean to say any thing prejudicial to the coast buss fishing, as I think it deserves the encouragement it has; but the proposed premium of 40s. per man to the boat fishes, will cost government much less than

the other ; a buss of eighty tons employs 3 boats and 18 men, the bounty of 30s. per ton, is 120l.—The same number of men in boats, costs Government only 36l. A bounty given in this way, comes immediately to the person actually employed in the fishing, and proves a most powerful incitement to his becoming an adventurer in the fishing, and then the whole produce of the fish comes into his own pocket ; having these two incitements, you make him a more industrious fisher than if he was fishing for others, and he will be more frugal, because he maintains himself. When a buss gets her cargo, she is allowed to return to port ; but in the bounty for the boat fishing I would have them under obligation to fish the full time of three months from the time they are licensed.

But another very great advantage will arise from encouraging the boat fishing ; and that is, the fishing of cod and ling round the island.—A number of fishers having proper boats to go to sea with, and fish on the coast, or at a distance, will be induced to follow that kind of fishing for the remainder of the year,

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On the subject of the boat fishing, a doubt arises in my mind, whether on the west of Scotland they could follow the herrings from loch to loch ; but I observe from Dr. Knox's publication, that they do this at present, and therefore no objection lies on that account. I know it will be said, that the decked vessels carry always the means of curing the herrings with them, I mean salt and cask, which I already admit is a great advantage ; but on the other hand, it is equally true, that vessels are at present employed, which go (without bounty and nets) in the character of buying from the boat fishers, and in the like manner as the busses carry salt and cask.

These traders would increase the number of boats, and give a ready market to the boat fishers, with this additional advantage, that the curing being carried on by an additional set of people, the fishers would have nothing to occupy them but the fishing ; the fish would be as well cured, and more people would be employed in the sea-faring way.

The proposed encouragement would be particularly well adapted to the highlands,
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but the poverty of the fishers on that coast requires some aid to assist in equipping boats and nets.—In the view of this, I humbly imagine, part of the money arising from the annexed estates, should be applied. I suppose a boat and nets will cost betwixt 30 and 40l., but a great deal of this the labour of the fisher and his family, in spinning and making the nets.—Suppose it was agreed that 12l. should be given for any new keeled boat, in length and breadth and depth having two masts and sails, and nets, dimensions, and rendezvoused in the highlands from the port of round to the port of manned with people who are inhabitants in that extent.—That this premium shall be given on a certificate from the Custom House where the boat is rendezvoused, and payable on her return from the fishing.

Suppose the number be limited to 500, would cost the fund of the annexed estates 6,000l.

Here would be the employment in the speediest way for 3,000 highlanders, first in the

the herring fishing for three months, and in nine months at the white fishing.

I cannot figure a more rational way of employing part of this public money.—It will most effectually encourage the poor highlander to stay at home, and, in place of his emigrating to America, will make an industrious citizen in his own country.

I next proceed to the encouragement to be given to the buss fishing in deep water, which the Dutch have the entire possession of.—As the spirit of fishing appears to call people's attention, I humbly imagine that the bounty of 50s. per ton, which was given some years ago, should be again given to this fishing, under the same regulations as the former act, with some farther for the faithful fishing and curing the herrings—For example, that they must not use boats in the fishing, but fish with the vessel floating her nets, after the manner the Dutch do—That they may be expressly confined to fish from Shetland, beginning the 24th June; and to follow the fishing to the southward, along the east coast of Britain, until the
12th

12th October—That salt be used of a refined quality—And that all herrings be cured on the day they are caught: with such regulations as will keep up the cure to that of the Dutch fishing.

Vessels for the fishing require to be of a particular build, calculated to lie easy in the water, when floating with her nets. It will become very expensive to build vessels in Britain for this trade: I would give the British fishers liberty to buy vessels from the Dutch, or elsewhere, adapted for this trade. I would make them free bottoms for the year they fish by a certificate to that purport, granted by the Custom House from whence they fit out and return, so as to enable the owners of that vessel, when the fishing is over, to employ the vessel the remainder of that year in the coasting trade, with the same privileges as if British built: and for the farther encouragement of the fisher, that it shall be declared, if she is employed in that fishing for running years, she shall be declared a free bottom for all time coming.

It will be very necessary to give this encouragement in the beginning of the trade,

as adventurers will be very backward in laying out a great deal of money on a new vessel, built in Britain expressly for that trade alone, and not so well in other respects fitted for the coasting trade. In this view, Great Britain only loses the labour in building the vessels, as a great part of the materials come from abroad. If Government is afraid of this bringing forward too many foreign vessels, the proposed privilege may be granted to the extent of busses first employed in the trade, which will be such a number as to give the fishing a full trial how it can to be carried on to advantage.

MEMORIAL *as to the Boat Fishing on the East and West Coast of Britain*; 26th April 1785.

I have stated in a former memorial, the importance of encouraging the British fisher to fish herrings in deep water by means of busses fitted out for that purpose, in the
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same manner that the Dutch carry on that most important trade.

I have also brought forward such clauses, selected from the former acts of Parliament, as to frame an act to encourage the British fisher.

I have now to speak of the encouragement to the boat fishing on the east and west coast of Britain.

In a paper on this subject, I have stated the former practice of fishing herrings on the east coast, by what was called the ground fishing, and the present practice of fishing at the float, which is exactly the Dutch method, with the only difference of its being done with boats in place of ships.

I have mentioned fully the great importance of the float fishing, not only as to the quantity of herrings which will be caught in this way, from the long continuation of the fishing; but above all, the very superior quality of the fish which are caught early in the season.

In the view of bounty, to this mode of fishing, I would begin at the same time as proposed for the busses — That the boats shall be rendezvoused at Shetland, Kirkwall,
Inver-

Inverness, Aberdeen, Dundee, Dunbar, or Yarmouth, on the 20th day of June, having on board 4,500 square yards of net, with six men (one may be a boy). On being rendezvoused, the master of the boat, with one of the crew, shall become bound to fish at the float fishing from the 24th of June to the 25th of September, every night that the weather will allow; and that on each night, Saturday and Sunday excepted, they shall be at sea, for the purpose of fishing, not less than during the floating season, unless they have caught sooner to the quantity of 5000, and wind and weather serving: but from the 20th August to the 25th September, they may set nets at the ground fishing or float in their option.

That the master of the boat with his crew, be rendezvoused on the first of October annually, when they are to be surveyed, and then to shew their nets, or the loss of them be certified by oath — That the master and one of the crew shall make oath to their having followed out the fishing in a regular manner, according to the act of

Parliament, having fished every night that the weather would allow.

That each boat's crew, on the faithful performance of these regulations, be entitled to £. sterling.

I am perfectly satisfied, that no crew can afford to lay out 30l. sterling for a boat, and 50l. sterling for nets, to fish for that bounty in the manner expressed in these regulations — That they must be successful to induce them to carry on the fishing; and when they cease to be so, they must give it up — That each boat pay of fees 2s. 6d. and no more, to be divided, one half to the collector and comptroller, and one half to the surveyor and land waiter at the ports of rendezvous.

That the securities be on paper without stamps, as boats cannot afford to pay them.

That when the day of rendezvous happens on a Sunday, it is to be done the Monday after.

It is necessary to have the boats rendezvoused in one day, to prevent their lending nets to each other.

But

But if the number is so great, that it cannot be done on one day, the officers may continue the rendezvous for more days; but on that event, they must take the nets of those they rendezvous into keeping until the whole is finished — but so as the rendezvousing be over in three days.

As to the boats, they cannot be confined to follow the tract of the fish as the buffes do: they must, according to the former acts of Parliament, be left at liberty to fish where they find it most their interest.

These regulations, as to time and place of rendezvous, will do for the east coast of Britain.

Those better acquainted with the west coast, will fix the places of rendezvous, and times of fishing there, on that coast,

STATE between a Bufs of 47 tons and her owner, at the medium rate of fifing fince 1778, being 110 barrels.

Bufs	Dr.	Contra	Cr.
To the price of 110 herring barrels, at 50s. per last	22 18 4	By sales of 110 barrels of herrings, at 20s.	110 9 0
Do. of 130 bushels of falt, used in curing and re-packing	14 1 8	British; per barrel	—
Tear and wear of netting, with the expence of barks	21 0 0	Debenture on do. at 2s. 8d. per barrel	9 14 8
Provisions to 11 men for 3 months, at 8d. each per diem	33 0 0	Bounty on the bufs, at 30s. per ton	70 10 8
Wages to do. for three months, at 27s. each	45 11 0	Balance, being loss incurred on the	60 4 10
Spirits used on the voyage	4 10 0	voyage	—
Tear and wear of the vessel	26 0 0		—
Do. of two fishing boats	— 15 0		—
Coals, 38s.—hoops and spare heading used, 17s.	2 15 0		—
Custom-house fees, and bond outwards	1 12 6		—
Custom-house fees inwards, and branding herrings	2 5 2		—
Charges on re-packing herrings	3 5 0		—
Waste on falt and barrels returned in store, at 10 per cent.	3 18 0		—
Interest on the total sum sunk in the adventure, for three months, the amount of men's wages deducted	8 9 6		—
Insurance on 700l. at 1½ per cent, per month	30 15 0		—
Stock used on the voyage, cabin stores, and necessaries	5 10 0		—
Charges of re-packing falt and cellar rent, at 4d. per bushel	2 3 4		—
Freight of 110 barrels of herrings to Cork, being the ordinary mercial, at 2s. 6d. per barrel	13 15 0		—
Duty on 110 barrels herrings paid in Ireland, at 1s. per brl.	5 10 0		—
Commission to the merchant who sells them, at 2½ per cent.	2 15 0		—
	£. 250 9 6		£. 250 9 6

4 00 58

